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God's Presence and Purpose in our War.

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GOD'S PRESENCE AND PURPOSE IN OUR WAR.

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THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA,

Thursday, November 26, 1863,

BY

REV. WILBUR F. PADDOCK,

RECTOR.



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PHILADELPHIA, November 26, 1863.

REV. WILBUR F. PADDOCK.

DEAR SIR: Among the privileges of this Thanksgiving Day, we will long remember the words of comfort and encouragement, as well as of true loyalty and patriotism, to be found in your Sermon delivered in St. Andrew's Church this morning; and that its influence for good may be extended, we beg to ask the favor of a copy for publication.

Very truly, your friends,

JOHN D. TAYLOR,	W. B. WHITNEY,
JOHN CLAYTON,	GEORGE HAWKINS,
JOHN ASHHURST,	CLEMT. S. RUTTER,
JAMES W. HAZLEHURST,	T. D. NANCREDE,
ARTHUR G. COFFIN,	G. A. COOKE,
C. L. BORIE,	GEORGE W. TAYLOR,
A. J. LEWIS,	ROBT. W. HARRIS,
J. FISHER LEAMING,	JOSEPH KLAPP,
FREDERICK SCOFIELD,	S. G. FOTTERALL,
G. N. TATHAM,	A. E. BORIE,
JAMES S. COX,	W. S. GRANT.

PHILADELPHIA, November 28, 1863.

MESSRS. J. D. TAYLOR, JOHN CLAYTON,

JOHN ASHHURST, AND OTHERS.

GENTLEMEN: I am exceedingly gratified that my Thanksgiving Discourse met your approval, and was of any benefit. Deeply and strongly have I felt the importance of the sentiments it contains.

If in your judgment its publication would contribute to encourage the hearts and strengthen the patriotism of those who shall chance to read it, cheerfully is it placed at your disposal.

Very respectfully and sincerely yours,

WILBUR F. PADDOCK.

DISCOURSE.

"SURELY HIS SALVATION IS NIGH THEM THAT FEAR HIM, THAT GLORY MAY
DWELL IN OUR LAND."—PSALM 85: 9.

THE chastisements of nations, as of individuals, are Divinely ordered or permitted, to bring them to the knowledge and obedience of God. This truth is strikingly illustrated in the history of the Jews. Their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, afflicted with many sore privations and judgments, was to the intent and end, as their great leader expressly declared, "that they might know the Lord their God;"—that they might know His supreme control over the affairs of men, His power to punish transgression, His determination to root out sin and enforce the rule of righteousness; and thus be led to yield the obedience and homage due to the Lord of the whole earth. When this lesson was fully learned, God permitted them to enter the land of promise, of plenty, and of social and national prosperity.

And so again, when afterward they *forgot* God, and returned to their former wickedness and idolatry, and God permitted them, in the fulfilment of the warnings of prophecy, to be carried away into captivity in the land of the Chaldeans, by the mouth of Jeremiah he still

declared to them that "His thoughts were thoughts of *peace* and not of evil, to give them an expected end." Captivity would prove their greatest blessing. It would show them in the land of their enemies, the disgusting character and degrading effects of idolatry. It would bring, in most favorable contrast, the nobler worship of their fathers; it would teach them not only the necessity, but the privilege of returning unto the Lord their God, and acknowledging and obeying Him. "After seventy years be accomplished, saith the Lord, *then* shall ye call upon me and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord. And I will bring you again into the place whence *I* caused you to be carried away captive."

Though apparently their captivity was the greatest of calamities, sent in punishment for sin, in the mercy of God, it was also designed and made effectual in preparing them to afterwards receive and enjoy a larger and truer liberty, and a greater measure of Divine favor and blessing, than before was possible. The Psalm from which our text is taken, written on the publication of the decree of Cyrus permitting the Jews to return to their own land, clearly recognizes the truth we have asserted, and expresses it both in the language of pleading, of thanksgiving, and of exultant anticipation.

The principles which governed the Providence of God in his dealings with the Jews, are, my friends, the principles which govern Him in his dealings with all other

nations. In character and purpose he is "the same, yesterday, to-day and forever." He may reveal Himself more clearly to one people than to another; He may work out for one a greater destiny than for another, and accomplish His ends in different ways and with unlike instrumentalities; but, in His dealings with all, there are the same ends in view,—His glory and their highest good, and the same laws controlling His dispensations,—the laws of justice, of mercy, and of love.

What then does the history of His dealings with other nations teach us, in regard to our own troubles at the present time; and what comfort may we derive, on this day of National Thanksgiving, from the prospect afforded? Simply this. That the terrible war from which we are now suffering, while permitted to come upon us in punishment for national and individual sin, is designed also, to lead us as a people to the knowledge and obedient recognition of the supremacy of the Lord of the whole earth; and be effectual in the mercy and overruling providence of God, in preparing us for, and bringing us into the possession and enjoyment of, a higher state of prosperity, a larger and truer liberty both civil and religious, and a greater measure of Divine favor and blessing, than before was possible. So that we may be led with gratitude and exultation to exclaim with the Psalmist,—as after the long night of captivity he saw the dawning of the day of national redemption and prosperity,—“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.”

If such is God's design in permitting this great calam-

ity to come upon us, we are led to inquire how, under His overruling Providence, is this most desired result being reached and accomplished? By what instrumentalities and in what ways is He effecting His gracious purpose towards us? Answers to these questions are found in the history of the past two or three years. Let us attentively consider them.

I. God is leading this nation to the knowledge and fear of Himself, and securing and leading us into the possession of a higher and nobler future, first, *by withholding from us success, in our efforts to overthrow the Rebellion.*

When this war first broke out, what did we *not* expect to accomplish? What were we *not* able to do? "Study the relative strength and resources of the North and South," we said. "How can they expect to do anything against us? Look at the statistics. We twenty millions against their less than half that number. A flourishing commerce here and no commerce at all there. Money here in vast amounts, and none there. All the arts of life in full operation here, and scarcely known there. All means of supply here and few there. A navy here and none there. How immense the advantages!" And so we wrote in anticipation, and with unbounded satisfaction, upon the tablets of history, "Immediate defeat and ruin to them. Speedy victory and glory to us." But weeks and months passed by and the prophecy was not fulfilled. We saw the reason to be that our army was not large enough. Sufficient preparation had not been

made. The proper generals were not in command. We could easily conquer when everything was right, and everything *was* supposed to be right; and though some victories crowned our arms, some glorious deeds gave glory to our name, yet nothing permanent in value was achieved, no marked and positive advantage gained. And so another change of leaders is demanded, and another, and another; more armies and fleets required, new plans of operations devised; and so, too, months and years go by, and armies and fleets, in number and power such as the world never before saw, are yet struggling with the enemy, and have not brought this wicked Rebellion to a close.

We have learned wisdom in defeat. Our national pride has been sorely and greatly humbled. The boasts of two years ago now sound in our ears vastly like satire and ridicule. We have discovered that with all our wealth, and resources, and bravery, we are not invincible. Hundreds and thousands in this land are beginning to see what they never saw before,—the insufficiency of mere armies and navies, however powerful, in a contest like this. Those who have heretofore been blind on this point, see and feel that in estimating the means and grounds of success, something beside numbers, skill, discipline, and the valor of troops, are to be taken into the account. Something else than the justice of our cause, the character of our motives, the weighty importance of the principles involved, and of the results to be attained. We have found that after all is put into *our* side of the balance, which in any way is favorable

and conducive to success, and after all is taken from *their* side of the balance, which may be justly considered unfavorable and likely to result in defeat, yet, in proportion to the relative means of each, the scales of success have greatly preponderated upon the side of the enemy. We have found, sorely to our discomfiture and perplexity, in view of our evident and acknowledged superiority, that there is something thrown into the scale of the opposing side, whether to secure to them ultimate triumph, or to protract and increase our punishment, which, when we are weighed with the enemy in the balances of actual competition and trial of strength, causes us to be found wanting.

Politicians will say it is only the superior skill and strategy of the Rebel leaders, more vigor and clearness of purpose in their Executive, greater devotion and unity among the people. But the nation is beginning to learn, that beside and more than all this, that something is nothing less than the *Hand of the Almighty*, which, though unseen behind the veil of His Providence, presses with such power upon the opposing scale as to make our boasted strength and superiority as yet insufficient to crush the Rebellion. Our dependence upon human strength and wisdom has been weakened. Our recognition and belief in the overruling power of God has been strengthened, and we are being fast taught that in a contest sent in punishment for sin, and for the political and moral regeneration and elevation of this nation, the victory is to be won, not simply “by armies,”—as the word literally is,—“nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith

the Lord of Hosts." "The thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end;" but, adds the testimony of universal history, "not until my purposes are accomplished in you."

By withholding success, we have also been taught as a nation to value and worship less the almighty dollar. The necessity of contributing to the carrying on of this war; of emptying our banks and pouring out our treasure almost without limit; the general conviction, as publicly declared by the merchant princes of our land, that if the government is destroyed, property would be comparatively worthless; the feeling by this and other means constantly increasing, that country is worth more to us than gold or silver, houses or lands; that a man is more to be honored for devotion and self-sacrifice for its welfare than even for the welfare of himself and family; that he who at this time hoards his money and refuses to yield it, when needed for the good of the cause, is despicable and unworthy the name of a patriot or a man, while he who bountifully bestows it, is worthy of public respect and gratitude; these and like feelings and impressions, which have been wrought into the very texture of national character and opinion, have operated in a powerful manner to overthrow the worship of Mammon in our land.

Had we time, we might show how this war more than any which could afflict our country, is wonderfully adapted, like the plagues which Moses brought upon the Egyptians, to weaken the hold upon the affections and reverence

of the people of the gods they worship, and cause them to look upon some even with an Egyptian's disgust.

Again, by reason of the protracted character of this contest, and the necessities arising therefrom, changes have been wrought in the political, financial and moral condition and prospects of this country of the very highest importance, such as in all human probability could not otherwise have been effected. Measures for the protection and support of the government have been adopted, which probably will shape the policy, mould the opinions, and affect the interests of this nation for ages to come. Questions have been practically settled, vital as it appears to me, to the well-being and the very existence of this republic. Questions which, if unsettled or not settled aright, would inevitably breed divisions in the future as in the past, even though every trace of the present Rebellion be removed.

Do you ask what these questions and measures are? First, I will mention the Conscription Act, passed by the late Congress, and approved and enforced by the Executive,—whereby it was settled, that independent of the assent or dissent of State authority, the Federal Government, by express provision of the Constitution, and by right of self-preservation, has power to enrol all the able-bodied male citizens of the United States, and compel military service from such as are needed, to enforce the execution of the “laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions.”

Until the system of volunteering had been found inadequate to supply our armies with the requisite

number of men, the question as to the supremacy of the Federal or State authority in this matter was not mooted. It is true that in a previous war, the war of 1812, this point was under discussion, and both houses of Congress affirmed by a decided vote that the Federal Government could compel for its defence the service of those enjoying its protection. But the bill to this effect, by reason of certain minor differences, never became a law, and not until the past year was the question of National or State supremacy pushed to a practical issue. The failure to secure by the most liberal bounties any large accessions to the national forces, demanded a resort to more extreme measures if the Rebellion was to be subdued. A law was passed, requiring the Executive to obtain the requisite number by draft. And though its execution was resisted, and deeds the most cruel and revolting that ever disgraced this continent, were enacted in many of our cities, yet the Authority of the Government was sustained, and the law executed. Painful as it has been in many respects, subject as it may be to abuse, it is my humble opinion that no system for recruiting our depleted forces has been devised, which is fairer and more equal in the distribution of the public burden upon all classes of citizens: no law ever passed by Congress, and put into execution, which has demonstrated more completely and effectually *our nationality*. It proved to the world most conclusively, that we are not,—as the organs of public opinion in Europe have often said we were,—a mere collection of related but distinct provinces, without unity or centralization, a copartnership of states, a rope

of sand; but that we are a *nation* and *one* people, which, while divided for convenience into separate communities, with separate organized authority for the maintenance of order and the prosecution of local and minor affairs, yet in all the essential attributes of a nationality, in powers and functions necessary for the preservation of national life, national honor, national authority and influence, and the righteous fulfilment of national obligations; we are but *one people*, with but *one ruler*, crowned, and under the Constitution vested, with supreme authority during the term of his office, by the expressed will and choice of the governed.

The action of Congress and the Executive in demonstrating this great truth, has been approved in the late election by the voice of the people. We stand before the world to-day, as four years ago we could not, with the proof of *our* nationality written not only upon parchment to be questioned, misinterpreted and denied, but *in law executed* before the eyes of mankind, and in opposition to the wishes and efforts of the enemies of this republic at home and abroad. Hated as this law is by some, though it presses upon me—a clergyman—equally with you, I can, from my heart to-day as a lover of my country, thank God for it; and standing upon the testimony it has afforded to the broad national character and seal of the Constitution under which we live, can throw back the taunting cry that has come in times past from foreign shores, and exclaim, without fear of dispute, “I am a citizen, not simply of *one* of a ‘*copartnership*’ of states,” not merely of a *separate* province among many,

but of one mighty power *in* many,—of one great nationality. I owe allegiance, not simply or chiefly to the authority of Pennsylvania, but primarily and supremely to the Federal Government—to the United States, one and indivisible.” The heresy of State rights,—the great sin against our nationality, so fatal to internal peace and union, and so destructive to our influence and reputation abroad,—has met its death-blow; not only in the mighty uprising of the nation for the overthrow of the Rebellion, which is its natural and legitimate fruit, but in the seal of condemnation stamped upon it by the action of Congress and the votes of the people.

Another measure, made necessary by the protracted character of this contest, and as it appears to me, one of almost incalculable value to the integrity, stability and perpetuity of this republic, is the new system inaugurated by the Secretary of the Treasury for a uniform national currency, and a chain throughout the length and breadth of our land of national banks.

Before this war broke forth, when the pecuniary necessities and relations of the nation were not to be compared in magnitude and importance with what they now are, the old banking system, then in operation—as now—had many irremedial defects, and was open to many objections. The paper currency issued was more or less uncertain and ephemeral. Its value varied in the different States according to the rates of exchange. It was liable to depreciation from mismanagement, dishonesty and financial disaster. Its security was largely local and based frequently upon the integrity of single individuals.

Even with State banks, confidence in their issues was sometimes impaired by the unavoidable depreciation of their stock securities, the inadequate protection afforded them by State legislation, and the wilful repudiation of obligations.

To overcome the defects of this system, and meet the largely increasing demands of the people, and vast obligations assumed for them by the Government in the prosecution of this war, the national banking system was devised and put into execution. I have not time, my friends, nor is this the place, to speak of the benefits of this system to the individual, and of its prospective blessings upon our commerce and trade. I cannot stop to show the convenience and advantage to every person in this country of a circulating medium, universal in its credit and confidence, free from any serious depreciation, nearly uniform in value in Maine and California, current in one State as another, redeemable, in case of the failure of the banks, at the United States Treasury, and secured by the whole credit of the government. No, though this is very important, I wish to take even a higher view of the matter; to speak rather as a patriot of the influence and effect of this system upon the future of this country.

No one, I think, will fail to see, that a chain of national banks, stretching north and south, east and west, over this land, issuing a currency alike held and circulated by *all* the people without distinction of State, color, rank or opinion, cannot but prove a network of such mighty power, as to be in itself almost if not quite sufficient to prevent future rebellion or the possible disruption of this

republic. Such banks, being sustained by the credit and secured by the resources of the nation, every person holding the currency they issue, would be pecuniarily interested in the power and ability of the Government to meet its liabilities. And thus this circulating medium would be most potent in strengthening and cementing all the interests which can promote the future welfare and permanency of our Union. If the National Currency Act is generally and fully carried into execution, I believe the Briarian arms of this financial system will hold in powerful restraint the turbulent passions and restless ambitious natures that have disturbed the peace of this country, and preserve, in greater harmony than ever before, the union of these States.

Thus by the Conscription and National Currency Acts, forced upon us by the necessities of a protracted contest, has God permitted us to take, politically and financially, a higher position among the nations; opened the way, when this war is over, for a closer bond of sympathy and interest among the people, more general support of the Government, and larger internal prosperity and foreign influence.

While thus, in view of what has been done for the future of this country, politically and financially, we have reason to be encouraged and to render thanks this day to Almighty God, our thanks, also, are more especially and heartily due for what has been done during the year for the *moral* advancement of this nation. It is by progress in this direction that we are to win the Divine approbation, and find the highest encouragement for the

speedy approach of the day of national redemption and prosperity. Bright, indeed, are the indications herein afforded. Gladdening the prospects growing out of the changes that have been made in the moral attitude and policy of the Government.

By withholding success to our arms, God has as it were forced upon us the attempt to remedy a grievous wrong, to remove the foul blot upon our nation's escutcheon, which has so long disgraced us in the eyes of the civilized world, retarded our moral and intellectual advancement, and called down upon us, in this fratricidal war, the righteous indignation of Heaven. Need I say that this grievous wrong and terrible evil is *Slavery*, and the remedy,—the proclamation of the Executive head of this nation of the emancipation of every slave in the rebellious States, and its practical execution in the onward march of our armies.

Had this war early closed, had we been victorious when the first quota of troops was called into the field, this proclamation could not have been issued. It would not have been a necessity as a war measure, and would not have been justifiable or constitutional on any other ground. So far as we can judge the future by the past, the motives which actuate and control the action of one generation by another, the possible progress of the power of Slavery in the control of coming administrations and legislative bodies, by its actual gains and the extent of its conquests, over those that have gone before; in all human probability this great evil would have continued to be a festering, burning cancer upon the body politic.

feeding upon the vitals of our civil and religious institutions, deepening, widening, and intensifying its fatal power of disintegration and decay, until America, the noblest and sweetest child of Liberty, and the hope of the world, should become a perpetual stench in the nostrils of the nations; or, under the curse of heaven, *fall* by her own weakness and corruption, and as a loathsome carcass, be in charity interred in a grave dug by a foreign foe! Thank God for the proclamation of freedom! Thank God for the President who has issued it, and for the will and power given him to enforce it! Thank God that the great body of the loyal people of the land approve the action of their Executive, and will sustain him in giving liberty to the captive. Now we breathe freer, can pray better, and labor harder for the overthrow of the Rebellion. Now we feel we are on the right path to complete victory over the nation's *sins*, as well as the nation's *enemies*. Now we believe that God will hear us, and the day of redemption draweth nigh. "Behold," said God to the ancient Jews, when seeking from Him deliverance from like sore trials and distresses as ours,—“in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” When ye have fulfilled *such* a fast, “then, saith the Lord, shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before

thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, *Here am I.*" And so, when this proclamation of freedom shall have been fully and righteously carried out,—when this nation shall have done what it could to give back to a people long held in bondage their inherent rights and makes reparation for past wrongs, when our national pride is sufficiently humbled, the Sabbath better respected, the authority and power of God more generally acknowledged and feared, and the love of self and of gold exchanged and lost in a greater love and devotion to Christ, may we not believe, that having renounced and turned away from our sins, and fulfilled the conditions of an acceptable fast, we may obtain something of the rich blessing promised the Jewish people.

If such be some of the present and prospective results of withholding success to our arms in attempting to put down this Rebellion, surely God has wrought for us the greatest blessings out of the bitterest trials and afflictions,—moral victories and conquests out of military defeats and disaster. Surely the blood of our noble youth has not been spilt in vain; and the weeping and the mourning of the widow and the fatherless, and the darkened homes, and the bitter pains and woes and groans that fill our land, are the *nation's travail* in the birth of a prosperity of privilege, of progress and attainment such as we have *never* before known.

II. God is leading us in this war to the knowledge and

fear of Himself, and to a higher condition of prosperity and influence, not only by withholding from us success,—striking thereby at our greatest national sins, and forcing the settlement of vitally important questions,—but also *by marked providences in our favor*.

Who in our land was not impressed with this fact by the first naval duel with iron-clads that occurred in our waters? Man had not designed or intended it. Our authorities did not suspect the coming, if they were aware even of the character of the Merrimac, when she bore down upon our wooden fleet in the harbor of Norfolk. No preparation had been made sufficient to meet her. The Monitor, the only vessel in our whole navy that was able to cope successfully with her terrible armament and iron-plated sides, was considered of so little importance, that when she steamed out of the port of New York, on her trial trip, few were aware of her departure. She was not sent to engage her powerful foe. On the contrary, while upon her passage south, an order from the Navy Department was sent to call her back. But God interposed. The order was not permitted to be delivered. Winds and storm were made the executors of His will. Her voyage was retarded sufficiently to permit her antagonist to come forth and display her character and power, but not sufficiently to prevent her coming in time to save and defend the nation's property and the nation's honor. At the very moment when really needed, when most desired, and all was apparently lost, she came to the rescue and secured a glorious victory. *It was a victory given of God.* The

fact was too palpable to be denied. Even skeptics and infidels were compelled to confess, that if there *be* a God, and if He indeed rules in the affairs of men, this was unmistakably a special Providence. It awoke the nation to see that God was in this war. It led them to feel that He was to be taken into their counsels, and His aid and power invoked. It impressed the North with the fact, that God's thoughts toward them were "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give them an expected end."

Notice also His marked Providence in our favor at the battle of Pittsburg Landing. The Rebel general had made every preparation, had taken every step to overthrow, with superior numbers, the Federal army. It was wholly ignorant of its danger. It rested in perfect quietness—with a want of preparation for attack almost criminal—while the forces and engines of war were gathering in terrible array for its destruction. There was no chance of retreat in case of defeat. The long lines of the enemy were in front, the swift waters of a deep river flowed by in their rear, with no transports at command. Many days must pass by before reinforcements could possibly arrive. Their destruction seemed inevitable. The Rebel general seemed already to have grasped his prey and have won the laurels of a brilliant victory. The order to move was given. The heavy battalions creep nearer and nearer their unsuspecting enemy. The brazen engines of destruction are unloosed and ready to belch forth fire and death. One day more the carnage shall begin, and heavy ruin fall upon the Federal arms. But there was an *ally* near at hand that the Rebel gen-

eral thought not of. There was a foe to dispute his march which he could not overcome. "They fought from heaven. The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The rains descended and held the mighty host in check until the coming reinforcements of the Federal army had so far approached, as to join in the contest at its close, and bring victory out of defeat. *God did it.* It was another signal Providence which the nation saw and felt the warning and the promise of,—a warning to those who fight against the powers ordained of God, which indeed they confessed that they felt,—a promise of deliverance to those, who, while in the path of duty, will seek the aid and guidance of Him who ordereth all things "according to the counsel of His own will."

Need I mention other marked and impressive providences to show that God is in this war, and is leading us as a people to see and fear Him, and to a higher destiny? What one more fresh in your memory, more deeply impressed upon your mind, more generally acknowledged by the inhabitants of this city, than that which saved this city from being given up into the hands of our enemies,—that memorable month in which was fought the hard-contested Battle of Gettysburg. When the news first reached us that the Rebel general, with a large force, had crossed the Potomac and was marching on Philadelphia, what consternation prevailed in our midst! What apprehension filled our minds! With what sorrow we walked these streets! Never shall I forget those terrible days. But little confidence was placed in the power of the Federal leader to prevent the onward march of

the enemy. The raw militia gathered at Harrisburg we knew to be insufficient and incapable of throwing any serious obstacle in their way. Determination was strong to do all for the defence of our city and homes that we could, but we felt that we could do but little. If God came not to our rescue, our convictions were, that soon fire and sword, pillage and rapine, and all the fiends of this terrible war, would inaugurate their fearful reign in our midst. We fled for protection to the Almighty arm. Prayer, earnest and importunate, arose from assemblies of saints in this and other churches, from the family altar in our separate homes, and from the secret places where we are wont to meet God alone. Our cry was for deliverance. God heard and answered in mercy. Our city was saved. The enemy was overthrown, and driven from the soil they had polluted. *God did it.* Not simply by giving success to our arms when actually engaged with the enemy at Gettysburg, but by withholding attack when such success was in all human probability impossible.

Said Mr. Everett, when speaking of this three days' battle, in his oration at the consecration of the National Cemetery, "had it not been for the providential inaction of the Rebel army on the morning of the second day of the engagement, nothing but a miracle could have saved our army from destruction." While, then, we will acknowledge, with gratitude, the skill, courage, devotion, and almost superhuman endurance of those who were the instruments of Providence in the overthrow of the Rebel forces, we cannot but ascribe the

praise of our deliverance to Him who withholdeth or giveth success to whomsoever He will, and whose gracious goodness to us is clearly manifested in the prosecution and triumphant termination of this most memorable engagement.

Many other providences, equally striking and equally convincing, with those mentioned, might be adduced. But these are sufficient. They are most instructive and encouraging. They are bright omens of ultimate success in our efforts to crush this Rebellion, which we will remember and cherish on this our Thanksgiving Day.

III. Finally, God, by his *general providences*, no less than His special, is seeking to bring us to a devout recognition of His supremacy in the affairs of this nation, and of His gracious purpose towards us.

Wonderful has been the general health of the people, and the prosperity attending every branch of trade. The abundant harvests which have crowned the year, making, contrary to the usual order of production, *four* years in succession of most lavish supply, are found sufficient to meet all our wants at home, feed our immense armies and navies,—with the additional amount necessarily lost by capture or destruction,—and furnish beside a large quantity as an article of trade for the accumulation of foreign capital. And all this comes from God. Blight, and mildew, and drought, and adverse winds and storms, might leave us almost without food or products to exchange for the gold needed

in the prosecution of the war, in commerce, and in the arts. And why are they not sent? Why are we so remarkably favored as regards supply and the order of production, when our necessities are much greater than usual, and harvests large, and in succession are almost indispensable? It is the Lord's goodness. It is that He may accomplish *for* this nation and *in* this nation His righteous purpose. It is that we may acknowledge and fear Him as a people, and yield Him the obedience which is His due. That we may look upon Him, not with a slavish fear, but with filial fear—the fear of the child which acknowledges the father's power and supreme authority, and strives not to offend or incur his displeasure, while at the same time filled with gratitude and love for his abounding mercies and great goodness. It is to awaken and increase this feeling and prepare us for a higher state of prosperity, that God has withheld from our arms immediate success, specially interposed at times in our behalf, encouraged us in the hope and belief of ultimate victory, and continued the rich blessings of His providence, adequate for all our necessities, through successive years. May we be led to see and appreciate His gracious designs.

When true filial fear of God enters into the counsels of the nation and pervades the great body of the people, then has the day of our deliverance come, not only from outward, but from inward and *spiritual* foes. The promise is to us, as truly as to the ancient Jews, "God's salvation is nigh them that fear him." And for what? "That glory may dwell in our land." Yes, the glory which the

Psalmist prophetically saw should come to the Jewish nation: when mercy and truth should meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other: when truth should spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven. Beloved, pray that such glory may come and *dwell* in our land. Pray that God may *soon* visit us with His salvation; that our poor, imprisoned, starving soldiers in Richmond may be released; the valor of our troops be crowned with early and complete success; the absent loved ones returned in safety and honor to their homes; this dreadful war cease; and a new era of progress, of attainment, of exalted privilege and Divine blessing come to our sorely afflicted land. Live so that your prayers may be answered, and cease not to acknowledge not only this, but every day, the Giver of every good gift by acts of charity, of praise and thanksgiving.

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